

**STATEMENT OF DURAND JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
RECREATION, AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,
CONCERNING H.R. 2643, THE Fort Clatsop NATIONAL MEMORIAL EXPANSION ACT OF
2001**

FEBRUARY 7, 2002

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2643, a bill to adjust the boundaries of Fort Clatsop National Memorial.

The Department of the Interior supports H.R. 2643, with some technical and clarifying amendments as outlined in this testimony. This legislation will expand the boundaries of Fort Clatsop National Memorial, as called for in the site's General Management Plan, to include lands on which a trail linkage between Fort Clatsop and the Pacific Ocean will be established. The bill would also include within the boundary lands that will create a buffer zone to protect the scenic and natural resources that frame the park setting. The Department previously testified in support of a Senate companion bill, S. 423. The only substantive difference between the two bills is that H.R. 2643 includes two additional sites within the study provision.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set off with their Corps of Discovery on May 14, 1804, on an incredible journey that was to be a pivotal event in helping to shape the young United States. Their instructions from President Thomas Jefferson were to explore the Missouri River to its source, establish the most direct land route to the Pacific Ocean, and to make scientific and geographic observations along the way. A year and a half later, having traversed the continent, the expedition arrived at the Pacific Ocean and soon thereafter found a site that was suitable for winter quarters on what is known today as the Lewis and Clark River. On December 8, 1805, the expedition members began building a fort, and by Christmas Eve they were under shelter. They named the fort for the friendly local Indian tribe, the Clatsops. It would be their home for the next three months.

Life at the fort was far from pleasant. It rained every day but 12 of the 106 days at Fort Clatsop. Clothing rotted and fleas infested the furs and hides of the bedding. The dampness gave nearly everyone rheumatism or colds, and many suffered from other diseases. With all the adversity, the members of the expedition continued to prepare for the return trip that would take some home to family and friends, some to wealth and fame, and others to new lives in the wilderness. All gained a place in history among the greatest of explorers. They were truly the "Corps of Discovery."

Fort Clatsop National Memorial marks the spot where Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery spent the winter of 1805 - 1806, and is the only unit of the National Park System solely dedicated to the Lewis and Clark expedition. The bicentennial of the historic journey is fast approaching, and it is expected that well over one million people will visit the site during the bicentennial years of 2003 through 2006.

The historic site of Fort Clatsop was originally preserved and protected by the Oregon Historical Society, and local citizens constructed an exact replica of the fort itself, which had long ago disappeared, except for drawings and descriptions in the journals of Lewis and Clark. In 1958, Fort Clatsop National Memorial was established by Public Law 85-435, which authorized the inclusion within the memorial of lands that are associated with the winter encampment of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, including adjacent portions of the old trail which led overland from the fort to the coast, where members of the expedition worked to make

salt for their trip back across the continent. The act also limited the site to no more than 125 acres.

Soon after the enactment of Public Law 85-435, the National Park Service acquired the land immediately surrounding the fort, and in 1978, the Salt Cairn site on the coast was added to the memorial by Public Law 95-625. However, the lands between the fort and the ocean, including the trail, have not been acquired. Legislation is needed to accomplish this goal since the memorial has already effectively reached its acreage limitation.

The 1995 General Management Plan for the memorial calls for the establishment of the trail linkage between Fort Clatsop and the Pacific Ocean, and in addition proposes to add sufficient land area to the memorial to provide for the protection of the scenic and natural resources that frame the park setting. Since the natural setting of the encampment area is an important component of the Lewis and Clark story, its preservation would assist in public interpretation at the fort, along with providing a corresponding benefit to the natural environment surrounding the fort. H.R. 2643 increases the authorized size of Fort Clatsop National Memorial from 125 acres to 1,500 acres and reflects the intent of the General Management Plan to include these lands within the park's boundary.

In addition, this legislation includes the addition of a "non-development buffer zone" at the request of Willamette Industries, who suggested that these additional lands, totaling approximately 300 acres, be included to protect the viewshed from their timber operations. The Department and Willamette have agreed that these lands should be acquired by condemnation because Willamette's title to the property is not clear. Since obtaining a quiet title to the standards required by the Department of Justice would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, both parties have agreed that condemnation is the best alternative.

The Department believes that this legislation is important for several reasons. First, time is of the essence in completing the land acquisition, environmental reviews, engineering and design, and trail construction that is necessary to complete this final link in the Lewis and Clark National Historical Trail for the bicentennial commemoration. Secondly, this legislation represents the completion of a process heavily influenced by local stakeholders. Third, this bill enjoys broad, bipartisan support at all levels, including local and state bicentennial planning committees in Oregon and Washington, Clatsop County, the Chinook Tribe, and the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

As you know, the Department is committed to the President's priority of eliminating the National Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog and is concerned about the development and life cycle operational costs associated with expansion of parks already included in the National Park System. However, in light of the increasing interest in the Lewis and Clark story as we approach the bicentennial of the expedition, the Department believes that the \$7.5 million needed for land acquisition, and the \$1.1 million for development costs associated with trailhead facilities, parking lots, and other associated infrastructure are justified. Funding for land acquisition and development would be subject to NPS servicewide priorities and the availability of appropriations.

In addition, we note that the Fort Clatsop Historical Association has already purchased some of the lands associated with this legislation and will donate them to the park after the boundary has been adjusted. We expect that the government's efforts will be leveraged through several partners, including the Army National Guard, local trail enthusiasts, and the local high schools, who have agreed to volunteer with trail construction and maintenance. We anticipate the park would seek only minor increases in operational costs (below \$250,000) beyond its existing base funding of \$1.1 million.

H.R. 2643 also includes a provision to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of several locations on the Washington side of the Columbia River, including the area known as "Station Camp," which is where the Lewis and Clark expedition camped from November 15-24, 1805. While the Department supports this study provision in concept, we believe that the study should carefully examine the full life-cycle operation and maintenance costs that would result from each alternative considered. In addition, in light of our commitment to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog in the national parks, our support for the study does not necessarily indicate that the Department would support any new commitments that may be recommended by the study, and that could divert funds from taking care of current responsibilities.

Our recommendations for technical and clarifying amendments are attached to this testimony. In addition, Findings 5, 8, and 9 found in Section 2 of H.R. 2643 include language that indicates that some of the sites to be studied for possible addition to the park are nationally significant and should be added to the park. Since the study would examine these issues, we would be happy to work with the subcommittee to develop language that will clarify these findings so that the outcome of the study is not predetermined by this legislation.

That concludes my testimony. I would be glad to answer any questions that you or the members of the subcommittee may have.

Proposed amendments to H. R. 2643:

On page 4, line 16, insert "as 'Addition Lands'" after the word "depicted".

On page 4, line 18, strike "405-80016-CCO", and insert "405-80026A-CCO".

On page 4, line 18 through 21, strike the sentence that begins "The Secretary shall maintain ...", and insert "The area designated in the map as the 'Buffer Zone' shall not be developed, but shall be managed as a visual buffer."

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